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S E R M O N

PREACHED in the

PARISH-CHURCH

O F

St. Butolph's Aldgate,

I N T H E

C I T Y of L O N D O N,

O N

Sunday the thirtieth Day of *November,*

In the Year of Our LORD 1729.

Occasioned by the

Erecting of a PLAY-HOUSE

In the Neighbourhood.

Published at the Request of several of the Auditors.

By *ARTHUR BEDFORD*, M. A.

Chaplain to the Worshipful the *Haberdasher's Hospital* at *Hoxton*, and Preacher of the Afternoon Sermons on Sundays at *St. Butolph's Aldgate*,
aforesaid.

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SEERMON

PARISH-CHURCH

St. Botolph's Aldgate.

CITY OF LONDON.

Sunday the thirtieth Day of November
In the Year of Our Lord 1729.

Preaching of a PSALM-HOUSE

In the Neighborhood of

By ARTHUR

Printed by J. Smith, at the Sign of the Crown, in St. Botolph's Church, Aldgate.
LONDON.

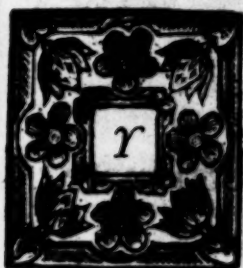




T O T H E

Worshipful His MAJESTY'S
Justices of the Peace in and
near the Parish of *White-*
chappel, in the Suburbs of
the City of *London*, and in
the County of *Middlesex*.

May it please Your Worships,



OUR pious and lau-
dable Zeal exerted
against the Play-
House, lately erect-
ed in your Neighbourhood, en-
courages me to dedicate to You
what I have done for the same
End, though in another Manner.
And as I doubt not, but Your
* A Endeavours

DEDICATION.

Endeavours are acceptable both to GOD and all good Men, and even to all those, who cannot be supported in your Neighbourhood, but by Trade and Industry, and who dread the Consequences of Idleness and Extravagancy, especially in these Parts; so if this small Treatise is acceptable to Yourselves, it will be a very great Satisfaction to

Your Worships most Affectionate,

And most Humble Servant,

ARTHUR BEDFORD.





2 TIM. ii. 16.

But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

 HE Erecting of a *Play-House* in the Neighbourhood obliges me to warn this Congregation of the great Evil and Danger in Frequenting them: So, that though there are many Vices in Conversation, which this Text adviseth us to avoid, I shall at present only apply the same to the publick *Actings* of the *Stage* in *Comedies* and *Tragedies*, and other Diversions of the same Nature, and endeavour to shew, That we ought to shun those *profane and vain babblings*, since a long Experience doth fully convince us, that *they* do increase unto more ungodliness.

In order to this it may be thought requisite, that I should prove these Diversions to be *profane and vain babblings*. But since this is as evident, as that the Sun shines at Noon-Day, since none in this Age deny it, except Persons of lewd Morals, and a reprobate Sense, I think, the Matter too notorious to be at this Time insisted on; and only desire such, who doubt the Truth hereof, that

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they would seriously peruse the *View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, with the *Sense of Antiquity on this Argument* (a). And also a smaller Treatise, entituled, *A Representation of the Impiety and Immorality of the English Stage, with Reasons for Putting a Stop thereto, and some Questions address'd to those, who frequent the Play-Houses*, or some others of those many Treatises which have been since published on the same Subjects; in the Perusal of which they may be fully satisfied, That the Misbehaviour of the Stage, in Respect to Morality and Religion, is intolerable, and it doth far exceed the Examples of the former, and even of the Heathen Ages and Poets, and the Liberties, which they take, are often offensive to the Profession of Christianity, which plainly appears from their lewd and filthy Communication, their Swearing, Cursing, Blasphemy, Profaneness, and lewd Application of Scripture; their Abuse of the Clergy, to make the Religion, which they profess, vile and contemptible; and also their Giving great Characters to Libertines, or Persons who scruple no Vice or Immorality, and Bringing them off with Honour and Success. How a fine (b) Gentleman is a whoring, swearing, cursing, smutty, atheistical Man. These Qualifications serve to compleat the Idea of Honour, and are the top Improvements of Fortune, and the distinguishing Glories of Birth and Breeding; and when all this is added to bold and daring Attempts after rich Fortunes, they are rewarded according to their Wishes, and instruct the Audience how to carry on the same Intreagues to the Ruin of other Families. In short, their Actions are chiefly designed

(a) By Jeremiah Collier. (b) Collier's *View of the Stage*,

Page 143.

to gratify such Persons, as are of vicious and de-
bauched Principles, who fear not GOD, and re-
gard not man; since it is generally from such, that
they have their Wealth. Hence it is, that their
Poets seldom scruple to speak Blasphemy, rather
than lose a Fancy; and to affront their GOD,
whilst they adore their Mistress. Hence it is, that
they look upon the Regulating the Play-Houses, and
Keeping them within the Bounds of Modesty and
Religion, to be the greatest Persecution, and
which would in the End prove the Suppressing of
them. For as they have given a just Scandal
to good Men; so if they had not such Acts and
Expressions, which will please the bad, they must
fall at once, and Necessity will compel them to take
other Employments. I shall not therefore spend
any Time in Proving these Things to be *profane*
and vain babblings, but endeavour to shew you the
Reasons which should induce us to avoid them,
and especially that which is mentioned in the Text;
because, if they are encouraged, *they will increase un-*
to more ungodliness.

To this End let us first consider the *Precepts*
and *Examples of the Primitive Christians*. It is
(c) very remarkable, that the *ancient Fathers* have
spoken most fully, against the *Plays*, which were
used both in *Rome* and *Greece*; and, if we did quote
all, which hath been said by them upon this Subject,
we must transcribe a great Part of their Works,
since they have written particular *Books*, as well as
Homilies or *Sermons*, upon this Occasion. *Lactan-*
tius (d) wondered at the Practice of the *Heathen*
Philosophers, who were present at the Actings of
such publick Interludes, and saith, That because

(c) Collier's View of the Stage, from Page 250 to Page 276.
(d) Lactantius, lib. 6. cap. 20.

they

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they are the publick Allurements of Vices, and do so effectually prevail to the Corrupting of Men's Minds, they ought to be suppressed; especially because they are not only unprofitable in Bringing us to Heaven, but are also very pernicious in Sending us to Hell. And in (e) another Place he asks this Question, Who would not look upon that Man to be very wanton and wicked, who did suffer such Acts in his own House? And then he adds, That there is no Difference, whether we are guilty of Lasciviousness alone at Home, or encourage it by Frequenting the same publickly in the Theater. St. Cyprian (f) saith, That Adultery is learned, whilst these things are seen; and the chaste Matron, who goes to behold such Sights, returns Home with a corrupt and debauched Mind. Here (saith he) Wickedness is beheld most willingly and with Delight. What then cannot such Actions persuade others to do? And therefore he adviseth us to consider, Whether a Person can be either innocent or modest; who is present at such Things?

And as the (g) Primitive Christians did constantly urge the Necessity of Abstaining from these Plays; so such, as owned themselves Christians, did as conscientiously follow their Advice. They went not to the publick Games, nor frequented the Shows, which were made for the Diversion and Entertainment of the People; and this was so publickly known, that the Heathens charged it upon them as a Crime. Cæcilius in Minutius Felix (h) complains thus, That the Romans governed and enjoyed the World, whilst the Christians in the meantime were careful and mopish. They abstained from

(e) Lactantius, lib. 6. cap. 21.

(f) Cyprianus in Epistola ad Donatum.

(g) Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, Book 2. Chap. 2. Page 32.

(h) Pag. 34, Oxford Edition.

such Pleasures, they visited not the Shows, nor were present at the Pumps. They frequented not the publick Feasts, but abhorred all such Diversions. This Octavius, the Christian, granted to be true, when he pleaded their Defence, and said in Answer to this Charge, That (i) since they were endued with Modesty and Sobriety, they had just Cause to abstain from those evil Pleasures, their Pumps and Shows, and to condemn them as hurtful Allurements. And he gives this Reason, because in those Acts and scenical Representations their filthy Communication is as great as their Madness, whilst the Actors speaking of Adulteries incite them, and the Stage-Players by Describing of Lust do inflame their Hearers. In short, (k) they thought, they could not be present at these Plays without great Sin and Shame, without Affronting their Modesty, and Offering a Distaste and Horrour to their Minds. They look'd upon the publick Sports and Pastimes of those Days, as the Scenes not only of Folly and Lewdness, but of great Impiety and Idolatry, as Places where the Devil eminently ruled, and reckoned those to be his Votaries, who went thither.

And as they thought it a great Crime to be present at such Sports; so they looked upon it as contrary to their *Baptismal Vow*. At the Time when Persons were baptized, they were (l) among others asked these two Questions, *Dost thou renounce the Devil, and all his Works, Powers, and Services? And dost thou renounce the World, and all its Pumps and Pleasures?* And to each of these Questions the Party answered, saying, *I do renounce them*. And each of these Questions they supposed to be directly levelled against the Thea-

(i) Page 106.
Chap. 2. Page 32.
ap. 42. pag. 993.

(k) Dr. Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, Part 2.
(l) *Constitutiones Apostolicæ*, lib. 7.

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ters. St. Cyril (m) expounding the Word *Pomps* (the Word which we still use in our Baptism, in a Question of the same Nature) expressly tells us, that thereby is meant *The Sights and Sports of the publick Stage*. Those (n) pompous Spectacles, Plays, and scenical Representations exhibited in the Roman and Grecian Theaters, which, because they were so lewd, cruel, and impious, it was an early Custom for the primitive Bishops and Fathers of the Church, in their Discourses to the baptized Persons, strictly to enjoin them not to frequent, or so much as once to be present or seen at such Places. They reckoned (o) all those Pomps as Allurements to Vice, and those Houses as so many Synagogues of Satan, and consequently, that by Renouncing the World and the Devil they also renounced them. Accordingly Tertullian tells us (p) of a Christian Woman, who, going to the Theater, was there possessed by the Devil; and when the evil Spirit at his Casting out was asked, How he durst set upon a Christian? he presently answered, I did but what was fit and just, for I found her upon my own Ground. Neither is this the only Instance, which

(m) Cyrillus Hierosolym. Catech. Myst. Vol. 1. Page 510.

(n) Dr. Bray on the Church-Catechism, Sect. 19. (o) It may be observed from St. Cyril, that the Word *Pompa* is used to signify the Acts of the Stage, tho' that is not its only Meaning. It may also be observed, that the Word was used in this Sense both by Heathens and Christians. The Heathen in Minutius Felix charged the Christians with this pretended Crime, *Non Pompis interestis; and the Christians confessed the Charge, saying, merito malis voluptatibus, & Pompis vestris, & Spectaculis abstinemus. And therefore as the Word Pomps is expressly used in our Renunciation at Baptism, and in our Church-Catechism; as also we ratify and confirm the same in our own Persons at Confirmation, and as the Word is of a Greek Original; so, I think, that there is Reason to take it according to the Sense of a Greek Father, and not confine it only to the Sense, in which the Latins often used it.* (p) Lib. de Spectaculis, Page 701. Edit. Basil 1562.

he there mentions, but he saith, that *there are other Examples of those, who, while they held Communion with the Devil by Frequenting those Shows, did at the same Time fall away from the Faith.* And then he adds, *For no Man can serve two Masters. What Communion hath Light with Darknes? And what Fellowship hath Life with Death? We ought (saith he) to hate those Meetings and Assemblies of the Heathen, because there the Name of GOD is blasphemed.* And after this he expostulates thus with those in his Time, *Do you doubt but that in the Minute, in which you shall be present. at the Synagogue of Satan, all the Angels do look down from Heaven; and behold every one who speaks the Blasphemy, and who hears it, who lends a Tongue, and who lends an Ear to the Devil to be employed against GOD? Will you not therefore avoid that Seat of the Enemies of CHRIST, that infectious Chair, and that Air, which is polluted with such wicked and profane Discourse?* And therefore since our modern Plays, which are acted in those Houses, are no less inferiour to the ancient Ones in Impiety and Lewdness than they are in Show and Pomp; we may suppose, that those ancient Fathers, if they had lived in our Days, would have expressed their Resentments now, in the same Language which they did then. Since they have such a malignant Influence upon Faith and Manners, (as it is owned almost by all Persons, and as it is generally complained that they have) they may be reckoned among the Works of the Devil, as well as those of former Ages, and therefore ought not to be encouraged by such, who call themselves Christians. And since we also have been baptized, and have promised to Renounce the Devil and all his Works, as well as the vain Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, so

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that we will not follow, nor be led by them; we ought, as they did, to consider the Nature of our *Baptismal Vow*, and (q) beware, lest we break that *Covenant*, which we so solemnly made with our GOD.

That this is our present Case may be abundantly seen in many Books and Treatises, which have been printed on this Subject; among which I shall only mention one of the greatest Rank among us, which is Archbishop Tillotson, who in (r) one Sermon calls the *Play-House* the *Devil's Chapel*, and the *School and Nursery of Lewdness and Vice*. And in another (s) he saith, that the *Plays* do intrench upon natural Modesty, and for that Reason are forbidden and condemned by the Christian Religion; and (as they are now ordered among us) are a mighty Reproach to the Age and Nation. That they are intolerable, and not fit to be permitted in a civilized, much less in a Christian Nation, and that they do most notoriously minister both to Infidelity and Vice. By the Profaneness of them they are apt to instil bad Principles into the Minds of Men, and to lessen that Awe and Reverence, which all Men ought to have for GOD and Religion. And by their Lewdness they teach Vice, and are apt to infect the Minds of Men, and dispose them to lewd and dissolute Practices. And therefore (as he adds) I do not see how any Person, pretending to Sobriety and Virtue, and especially to the pure and holy Religion of our blessed SAVIOUR, can without great Guilt, and open Contradiction to his holy Profession, be present at such lewd and immodest Plays, much less frequent them, as too many do, who yet would take it very ill to be

(q) Prov. ii. 17.

(r) In his third Sermon concerning the Education of Children, Page 220. First Edition.

(s) Vol. 11,

Page 319, 320, 321.

shut out of the Communion of Christians; as they would most certainly have been in the first and purest Ages of Christianity.

And now let us consider the Reason, which the *Apostle* urgeth in the Text. If we should encourage this Evil, it will make Way for more: And, if we do not *shun* these *profane and vain babblings*, they will increase unto more *ungodliness*. In vain do we pretend to a *Reformation of Manners* and a *Regulation of our Youth*, when such Temptations lie in their Way, which, if frequented, will certainly debauch them. In this Case we must expect that Youth will follow what is most agreeable to their corrupt Inclinations; and whilst the Temptations are equally strong on either Side, and the Heart of Man is fully set in him to do Evil, we cannot but expect, that the Consequences hereof will be fatal to some, and that the *Devil* will not be wanting to make Use of such Opportunities to tempt Men to Sin, until they are involved in eternal Destruction. The sad Experience hereof made *Menander*, a Heathen Poet, to say, That *evil Communications do corrupt good Manners*; which was so certain and true, that it became a *Proverb* in *Greece*, and was afterward assented to by *St. Paul*, who inserts the same into the *holy Scriptures* with a particular Caution of his own, lest we should be deceived by such Insinuations. And therefore it may not be amiss to suppose, that *St. Paul*, directing his Epistle to *Timothy* at *Ephesus*, where the *Comedies* of *Aristophanes* were frequently acted, might have a particular Reference to these Enormities, when he advised him to *shun profane and vain babblings*, because they would increase unto more *ungodliness*: And indeed we there find the Effects thereof, for (t) their Manners were loose and pro-

(t) Strabo Geogr. lib. 14. pag. 41.

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fligate, wanton, and effeminate; and they had an Injunction in their common Discourse, *Let none of ours be thrifty*. And if this was the Case in a City, where they could hardly be worse, what Degeneracy must be expected in a Place professing *Christianity*, and making, at least, some Show of Religion?

But it is not sufficient to speak of the Increase of Ungodliness in general; and therefore I shall mention some particular Vices, which seem, in a great Measure, to be the Effects of our present Stage and their Actings.

The first is, The Profaning of GOD's Name by *Swearing, Cursing, and Blasphemy*. The Increase of this Vice is most amazing, and no one that walks the Streets is sure, that he shall not hear People calling upon GOD to *damn and confound*, sometimes themselves, and sometimes others, and more particularly that the *Plague* may rot them. There are innumerable and intolerable Examples of these Sorts in our modern Plays, as they have been fully exposed by later Authors; and these are spoken as Patterns for the *Bullies* of the Age to imitate. The Disappointments in *Comedies* are never thought to be sufficiently express'd, nor the Passions in *Tragedies* to be sufficiently rais'd, until their Resentments are mixed with such hellish Language. Neither are they contented with such as are more common, because it looks as if they had not Wit enough to affront GOD more effectually than their Neighbours; but they are daily inventing a continual Variety of this Nature, as if the *Play-House* was only a Forge to hammer out new Pieces of Armour, whereby to rebel against GOD, and bid him Defiance. They who hear them with Delight soon learn them, and afterward use them in other Places; and thus like Persons sick
of

of the Plague (which they often call for) they carry the Infection from Place to Place, and so it overspreads the Nation.

Secondly, Murthers are often the Effects of the *Stage*. Many of our modern *Tragedies* are designed to shew the Success of such, who think their Wills to be a Law, who hector at, quarrel with, fight and destroy all before them. To these it is that the Actors pay Respect, give them great Titles, admire their Courage, and praise their Vices, instead of Virtues. Such Sights, Bloodshed, and Murther, being shewn on a Stage, do by Degrees occasion the Spectators to be cruel and outrageous; and Men do there learn to be *inhuman*. Such Persons, who are in the Heat of Youth, and are of a proud and passionate Temper, immediately think, that they may act the same Parts upon the publick Stage of the World, and come off with the same Success, until they are convinced of their Error, when perhaps it is too late. And it is very observable, that the greatest Persecutions, which were ever raised against the *Christians*, were began and carried on in *Heathen Rome*, where they had their *Theaters*, and their *Tragedies* were most frequently acted. This made them more cruel and delight in Bloodshed, inso-much that, at last, the Martyrdom of the Saints became their Diversion, and *Christians* were in Reality brought forth, and devoured by wild Beasts, to make Pastime for those, who had pleased themselves with such Resemblances. And since the Reformation it is as remarkable, that the most dreadful Persecutions against the Protestants, and all their Designs to destroy our Religion, have either been begun, or, at least, carried on and promoted by that City. This is the *great Whore*, who hath been diverted by the *Theaters, Carnivals and Jubilees*;

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bilees; and, as she was addicted to such Sports and Pastimes, it may be the less wondered at, that in all Ages she hath made herself so *drunk with the Blood of the Saints*. And even, among ourselves, it will be difficult to find one Instance of a Challenge or a Duel, except among such, whose Spirits have been warmed by being present at such a Furnace as this. But, having seen such Things in jest, they lose their Lives in earnest.

Thirdly, Adulteries and Whoredoms are the common Effects of the *Stage*. In one of our *Plays* (*u*) an Actor boasts, that this Effect is so visible in their Neighbourhood, that their Hearers cannot fail of Opportunities for such a Purpose. And indeed the notorious Immodesty, both in Words and Actions, which are there both heard and seen, the filthy Songs which are there sung, and the *Musick* framed by the Composers with such Notes, as will most affect the Passions, are but as so many Temptations to Lust, and serve only to instruct the Hearers, how to carry on their own filthy Designs, that so, at their Departure thence in a mix'd Company, they may go (if possible) to a worse Place, and be the real Actors of what was thus represented. Neither do the Effects stop here. These Songs are taught to young Ladies to sing, before they are sensible what they mean, and so the Parents pay for the Ruin of their own Children. Thus they learn Love-Songs, and such as are frequently intermix'd with Smut, and even Motives to Lust: These they are obliged frequently to repeat, before they can learn them, and the *Musician* seldom fails to set the worst Part off to

(*u*) Gibraltar, Page 6. Line 9. *Whores* are dog-cheap here in London. For a Man may step into the *Play-House* Passage, and pick up Half-a-dozen for Half-a-crown.

the greatest Advantage ; sometimes by a frequent Repetition of the Words, sometimes by Affecting Divisions, and always by such soft Notes, which, they too well know, will work upon that Passion. This of course makes them wanton, and so they think of Husbands, before they are capable to choose for themselves. Thus they are soon ensnared to gratify their Passions, by others who only catch at their Fortunes ; and are often tempted to worse Acts, which prove the Ruin of themselves, and the Sorrow of their Parents. Thus our noble Science of Musick is debased, and, like Cannon taken by the Enemy, is directly levelled against the first Proprietor. It was, at first, intended in the Church of GOD to set forth his Glory both in publick and private, and be a Help to us in our Way to Heaven ; but, instead of this ancient Design, it is abused to his Dishonour, and there is very little private Use made of it, unless it is to debauch Men's Morals, to heighten their Lusts, and send them directly into the Road to Hell. Good Men may wish, and pray, and endeavour for a Regulation ; but it must be an over-ruling Providence which can effect it, and to him alone in such a Case must the Glory be given.

Fourthly, Idleness is the common Effect of the *Stage*. It is with great Difficulty, that Youth are kept to Labour and Industry ; and therefore all Temptations to the contrary are prejudicial. But, when such leave their Callings to go to the Plays, it is but seldom, that the Masters have any Command of those who are under them. They have a strange Inclination to go thither again and again ; and so all necessary Business shall be neglected to gratify their Fancy. Besides, it is usually late, before the *Plays* are ended, and, if the Company

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is large, the Heat of the Place will make them thirsty. This exposeth them to go to *Taverns* and *Alehouses*, and then it is so much the later, before they return Home. By this Means Families are disordered, and forced to keep unseasonable Hours, and therefore they cannot be so early about their lawful Callings. After this, such Youth think themselves too good to be confined, and grow weary of the Station, in which GOD hath placed them. Thus the Principles of Idleness and Extravagancy are strangely infused into such People, as resort to these Places, which often tend to their utter Ruin. This may be an Argument to persuade all Tradesmen and Shopkeepers to restrain their Children, Servants, and Apprentices. If they are suffered to go thither, they will be apt to frequent them; and, if they have no Money of their own for such a Purpose, they will be apt, as Occasion requires, to steal it from their Parents and Masters, which being done by little and little, it may be long before it is missed in the Way of Trade, and after that it will be impossible to know how much they have been injured.

Fifthly, *Contempt of all Religion* is too often the Effect of the Stage. As such Persons seldom scruple to speak the most horrid Blasphemies, as a Diversion and Entertainment to their Company; so we cannot expect, that they, who are delighted with such Things, can be reckoned Men, who have any Sense of the Honour of GOD, or Fear of his Judgments. Nothing is more common here for such, than to affront their Maker, and make a Goddess of their Mistress, to think of no Heaven, except in her Company, and no Hell, but to be kept from her. This and much more, which one would tremble to relate, is the Language of the Play-House, and indeed some of the best. An Author
in

in the latter End (x) of the last Century, speaking of this (y) Subject, quotes out of the printed Plays, then extant, several Examples, where (z) the Service of GOD in a Church and Prayer is ridiculed, where they (a) swear by *Mahomet*, (b) contemn even Heaven itself, and (c) give the Preference to a *Turkish* Paradise; where (d) they make a Jest of their *Baptismal Vow*, where (e) they look upon *Providence* to be a ridiculous Superstition, and affirm, (f) that none but Block-heads pretend to Religion. In one of their Plays, (g) like *Lucian* and *Celsus*, they deride the Resurrection. One (h) speaks against the Immortality of the Soul, and (i) another brings in a *lewd Italian* Proverb for Authority, in Contempt of the *holy Scriptures*. All this was in the Infancy of this Impiety, which is now grown up to a Monster. Since this we have had the Devil (k) directly owned as a GOD, in Defiance of the first Commandment, he is called (l) a *more than mortal Power*; and the Inference is, that it is a *Rashness* and *Folly* to resist him, not without a profane Allusion to that Text of Scripture, (m) *Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy GOD*. Here we have

(x) A short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage, by Jeremiah Collier; the first Edition whereof was about the Year 1686. (y) A short View of the Stage, Chap. 2. Page 56, &c. (z) Page 66. (a) Page 61. (b) Page 81. (c) Page 61. (d) Page 63. (e) Page 81. (f) Page 78, and 147. (g) Page 66. (h) Page 68. (i) Page 67. (k) Thus an Actor speaks to the Devil in the British Enchanters, in order to gratify his private Revenge. Page 12. Line 22.

See it perform'd——and thou shalt be,
Dire Instrument of Hell, a God to me.

- (l) The British Enchanters, Page 16. Line 2.
Forbear, rash Mortal, give thy Frenzy o'er
For now thou tempt'st a more than mortal Power.
(m) Deut. vi. 16. Matth. iv. 7.

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the (n) *Eternity*, the *Omnipresence*, the *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, the *Goodness*, the *Truth*, and the *Vengeance* of GOD, in plain *English*, attributed to the *Devil*. Accordingly he is frequently pray'd to, and mentioned instead of GOD, in their serious Ejaculations. In one (o) *Comedy* there is a Song directly in Praise of the *Devil*, and the (p) Salutation of our SAVIOUR to his *Apostles* after his Resurrection, and of (q) the Angel to the *Virgin Mary*, is not only in (r) another Place put into the Mouth of a Witch; but here it is given as a Compliment to these *Powers beneath*, who are there represented as altering the divine Decrees; and it is farther added, that the *Actors*, wherever they come, do in this Manner provoke the Divine Justice, and dare even the GOD

(n) See the Book intituled, A serious Remonstrance in Behalf of the Christian Religion, against the horrid Blasphemies and Impieties, which are still used in the *English Play-Houses*, to the great Dishonour of Almighty GOD, and in Contempt of the Statutes of this Realm, particularly Chap. 7. or, The Divine Attributes ascribed to the Devil on the Stage, Page 76 to Page 90. (o) The Metamorphosis, Page 14.

Hail, Powers beneath, whose Influence imparts
The Knowledge of infernal Arts;
By whose unerring Gifts we move
To alter the Decrees above,
Whether on Earth, or Seas, or Air,
The mighty Miracle we dare.

That is, Wherever the Actors come, they set the great GOD of Heaven at Defiance, provoke him to enter into Judgment, and even dare him to do his worst. This is but the third Part of the Song, which concludes with invoking the Help, and craving the Assistance of these infernal Powers; but I suppose that the Reader doth not desire that I should transcribe any more, since, if GOD should enter into Judgment, all the Blood of the Nation is not sufficient to atone for this. (p) Matth. xxviii. 9. (q) Luke i. 28. (r) Mackbeth, Page 4. Line 34, 35, 36. and Page 5. Line 9, 10, 11, 15. The Word is Hail, which is now grown obsolete and out of Use, and others

GOD of Heaven to do his worst. In (s) a late Play, frequently acted, the Devil is expressly said to be a *very modest Person*, with other Expressions, too vile to be mentioned in this Place. In the *Old Testament* we are strictly charged (t) not to *suffer a witch to live*, and in the *New* (u) *Witchcraft* is mentioned as *the works of the flesh*, and that *they, who do such things, cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD*. In a Play, very frequently acted at this Time, we have (x) *Musick*, and (y) *Songs*, and (z) *Dances for Witches*; they enter (a) flying upon the Stage, and (b) go off again in the same Manner, and (c) a whole Train of *Witchcraft* is imitated. In their Discourse (d) they talk of commanding the Winds, and making foul Weather to the Distress of Mariners, and Revenge of themselves. In one of their Songs they give us an Account (e) of their merry Way of Living, and that (f) *all Things go fair for their Delight*; and after that (g) they solemnly commend *Witchcraft*, in a large Song for that Purpose.

C 2

others are come up instead of it; so that on our present Stage, it bath neither Wit nor Sense, but as it is a profane Burlesquing of the sacred Scriptures. (s) The Recruiting Officer, Page 50. Line 32. Look ye, fair Lady, the Devil is a very modest Person, he seeks no Body, unless they seek him first; besides, he is chain'd up like a Mastiff, and cannot stir, unless he is let loose. This Expression makes the Petition very impertinent, which Our SAVIOUR bath commanded us to use, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil; and gives the Lie to the Expression of St. Peter, 1 Epist. v. 8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. (t) Exod. xxii. 18. (u) Gal. v. 19, 20. (x) Mackbeth, Page 39. l. 38. and p. 44. l. 9. (y) Ibid. p. 24. l. 32. p. 25. l. 19. p. 39. l. 38. p. 40. l. 1, 17 and 23. (z) Ibid. p. 25. l. 19. p. 26. l. 6. and p. 44. l. 9. (a) Ibid. p. 3. l. 22. (b) Page 1. l. 14. (c) Ibid. p. 41, &c. Act 4. Scene 1. (d) Ibid. p. 3. l. 23. (e) Ibid. p. 25. l. 19. (f) Ibid. p. 40. l. 18. (g) Ibid. p. 40. l. 23. Oh,

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pose. From this *Play* we may see what Freedom they take on all Occasions with the *sacred Scriptures*. In these Books we are told, (*h*) that it is the glorious GOD, who makes a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning and the thunder, and (*i*) brings the winds out of his treasures. Here we have these Things represented as (*k*) raised by Devils, and also (*l*) by Witches, and their Diverting themselves at such a Time. The *Scriptures*, speaking of the Glory of GOD, say, (*m*) That he maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind. And a like Expression is used by an Actress on the Stage,

Oh, what a dainty Pleasure's this,
To sail i'th' Air,
Whilst the Moon shines fair,
To sing, to toy, to dance, and kiss!
Over Woods, high Rocks, and Mountains,
Over Hills, and mighty Fountains,
Over Steeples, Towers, and Turrets
We fly by Night 'mongst Troops of Spirits.
No Rings of Bells to our Ears sounds;
No Howls of Wolves nor Yelps of Hounds:
No nor the Noise of Water's Breach,
Nor Cannons Throats our Heights can reach.

From all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,
Good LORD deliver us. (*h*) Job xxviii. 26. Psal. xviii. 11,
12, 13, 14. Psal. xxix. 3. (*i*) Psal. cxxxv. 7. (*k*) Ri-
naldo, p. 45. l. 23. The British Enchanters, p. 16. l. 19. p. 33.
l. penult, and p. 34. l. 8. (*l*) Mackbeth, p. 1. Act 1. Scene
1, and p. 3. l. 21. Where Showers are added, and the Witches
speak thus one to another,

When shall we three meet again,
In Lightning, Thunder, and in Rain.

(*m*) Psal. civ. 3.

when

when she speaks of (n) the Devil sitting in a foggy Cloud at the same Time. And to add but one Instance more, The (o) Words of the LORD, *sitting upon his throne*, are put into (p) the Mouth of the Devil, that he may vie with him upon the like Occasion, when he speaks to his Witches, as the blessed GOD did to his holy Angels. In short, we have Reason to believe, that the constant Ridiculing, Burlesquing, and Exposing the *sacred Scriptures* with such a general Approbation from the Audience, is a great Reason of the Infidelity of the present Age; and hath made others so bold, as to treat the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, and the Miracles of Our SAVIOUR in the *New*, with such Scorn and Contempt, and as Cheats and Impostors, the like whereof cannot be met with since the Creation of the World: For he, who

(n) *Mackbeth, Pag. 39. line penult.*

Hark! I am call'd, my little Spirit (see)
Sits in a foggy Cloud, and stays for me.

(o) *The Prophet Micaiah describes the Majesty of GOD in this Manner, 1 Kings xxii. 19, 20, 21, 22. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And there came forth a spirit and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he saith, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also. Go forth, and do so.* (p) *In Mackbeth, Page 38. Line 34. the Devil thus speaks to his Witches.*

— I shall, e're Night,
Raife from the Center such a Spright,
As by the Strength of his Illusion
Shall draw *Mackbeth* to his Confusion.

For the same Purpose, they utter three ambiguous Prophecies to make him bold, Page 43. Line 6, 9, and 17, which, being taken in a wrong Sense, was the Cause of his Destruction, and added a greater Reputation

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who will read but a few Pages in these printed Books, may soon perceive, that they are the perfect Imitators of the *Play-House* Language.

Lastly, It is a Question, how far the *Stage* hath encouraged even the frequent Robberies on the Roads, and in the Streets. There is something new and surprizing, which offers it-self on this Head. In a late *Play*, which hath had a prodigious Run, to the Scandal of this Nation, we have a (q) *Crew of Beggars*, made so by their own Vices and Extravagancies. The Women, without any Sense of Decency, own themselves to be common (r) *Whores*, and seem to *glory in their shame*; and, to supply their Necessities, they take to (s) *Picking of Pockets* and *Shop-lifting*, and (t) the Men are for *Robbing* on the Highway. Here we have (u) *Methods* chalked out to train up Persons to Stealing. Here we have (x) *Picking of Pockets* encouraged, Highway Robberies pleaded for both in (y) *Prose* and (z) in *Verse*, with (a) *Methods* for Intelligence, and (b) *Murders* allowed in such Cases. Here we have also a (c) *Toleration* for Going off with the Goods of the honest Tradesman. Here the Laws, which are made in such Cases, are (d) *exposed*. Here we have (e) the *Courtiers*, and (f) *Court Ladies*

Reputation to the Oracles of the Devil, See Page 59. Line 25. for the two first, and Line 17. for the other.

From the crafts and assaults of the devil, from thy wrath and from everlasting damnation,

Good LORD deliver us.

(q) The Beggars Opera Drama. (r) Page 30. line 26, and 30. p. 31. l. 7, 12, 19, 21 and 23. (s) Page 29 and 30. (t) Page 24, 25 and 26. (u) Page 2. line 31; and p. 9. l. 7. (x) Page 8. line 13. p. 30. l. 15. (y) Page 24, throughout. (z) Page 26. l. 31. (a) Page 25. l. 17. (b) Page 5. l. 14 and 22. (c) Page 30. l. 1, 5, 8. (d) Page 24. l. 17. (e) Page 21. l. 11. p. 24. l. 27. p. 53. l. penult. p. 54. l. 2. p. 68. l. 12. p. 72. l. 5. and p. 74. l. antepenult. (f) Page 9. line 35. p. 28. l. 30, and p. 29. l. antepenult.

(g) *States-*

(g) *States-Men* (h) *Lords*, (i) *Gentlemen*, and (k) *Lawyers*, treated with the utmost Scorn and Contempt, for no other visible Reason, but because they desire to be secure in the Possession of their own, and are therefore willing to put the Laws in Execution against such Practices as these. Here we have (l) a Thief-Advocate, who acts both against Rogues and for them; that is, (m) he receives stolen Goods, and (n) disposes of them, both at Home and Abroad, and (o) sometimes to the right Owners. His Business is to teach them how (p) to plead, to (q) encourage Cheats, to (r) soften the Evidence, (s) to sink them, or (t) nail up their Lips, as (u) in his Power. This he doth, when the Person (as he calls it) is (x) active and industrious, and to save them from Transportation, because he can get more by their Stay at Home. He hates (y) a lazy Rogue (as he calls him) he (*) faves the worst, condemns (z) such as he hath the least Profit by; such who dispose (a) of stolen Goods without his Knowledge, and especially those who would live honest. He hath (b) a large Book of Accompts before him, and (c) his Daughter is a very considerable Fortune. The principal Actor is (d) the Captain of a Gang of Highwaymen, with these he meets at a Tavern; there are eight by Name, and others which are name-

(g) Page 1. l. 12. p. 38. l. 5, 12, and 18. (h) Page 6. l. 11. p. 11. l. ult. (i) Page 6. l. 11. p. 15. l. 12. (k) Page 15. l. 22. p. 16. l. 6. p. 21. l. 11, and p. 31. l. 31. (l) Page 1. l. ult. (m) Page 16. l. 11. (n) Page 7. l. 23. p. 55. l. 24, and p. 57. l. 16. (o) Page 14. l. 24, and p. 39. l. 23. (p) Page 2. (q) Page 2. l. 1. (r) Page 2. l. 10. (s) Page 66. l. penult. (t) Page 68. l. 6. (u) Page 67. l. penult. (x) Page 4. l. 1. (y) Page 3. l. penult. (*) Page 4. l. 1. (z) Page 4. l. 22. (a) Page 4. l. 10, and 16. (b) Page 1. l. 1. (c) Page 12. l. 8. (d) Page 24.

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less. Here they plead for their Practice, and encourage each other with the utmost Encomiums. This Actor hath (e) two Wives at a time, at least in all outward Appearance. He hath (f) eight Whores with him at once in the Tavern, and (g) and four Women more follow him with a Child a-piece. This is the Reason, that (h) Marriage is so frequently ridiculed, as also (i) conjugal Affection in a married State; and Adultery, Whoredom, Polygamy, and Intriguing with Women are so frequently pleaded for, both in Prose and Verse, according to the constant Practice of our modern Comedies. The Captain of the Highwaymen declares himself a common (k) Whoremonger. For his Robberies he is committed to Newgate, which for this Reason is made (l) a Scene on the Stage, and treated as a Jest rather than a real Punishment. Here we have (m) a Dance of Prisoners in Chains. Here we have (n) Plots for Escape, drawn up to Perfection for the Encouragement of such, who like these Courses. Here we have a (o) Scene of Drunkenness to allay the Fears of an Execution. In this the (p) Villain places all his Hopes; Adds to this, that he and (q) others also ridicule and burlesque

(e) Viz. Polly Peachum, the Daughter to the Thief-Advocate, and Lucy the Daughter of Lockit, the Keeper of Newgate.

(f) Page 28. l. 15. (g) Page 74. l. 12. (h) Page 7. l. 1. p. 10. l. 3. p. 11. l. 23. p. 14. l. 8. p. 15. l. 8. p. 16. l. 33. p. 17. l. 21. p. 37. l. 3. p. 39. l. 36. p. 40. l. 7. p. 42. l. 26. p. 61. l. 22. (i) Page 18. l. 9, and p. 34. l. 28. (k) Page 27. l. 11. with a Song in Praise of it, l. 18. so also p. 29. l. 10. p. 30. l. 90, and p. 43. l. 16. (l) Page 49. l. 2. (m) Page 70. l. 4. (n) Page 41. l. 7. p. 47. l. 10. (o) Page 70. l. 12, and ult. p. 71. l. 2, 7 and 10. (p) Page 74. l. 2 and 4. (q) Page 5. l. 6. p. 32. l. 3. p. 44. l. 15. p. 69. l. 11 and 17. p. 73. l. 2, and p. 74. l. 15.

the fatal Cord, as rather to be chosen than some temporal Misfortunes, and at last resolves to die (r) more like a Martyr than a Malefactor. After all this the Villain gets clear, is (s) the principal Hero of the Play, takes to the principal Actress for his Wife, who shew'd her Affection in the worst of Times, and he gives his bare Word, that he will be constant to her, and makes an honourable Exit, without any other Sign of Repentance for, or a Reformation from his former Villanies. If then our Prisons are filled with Persons for capital Crimes: If our Roads are infested with Robbers abroad, and our Streets with others nearer home: If Tradesmen cannot stir out for Fear of being knock'd down, and their Goods cannot be safe in their own Shops, it must be allowed, that the Poets, Actors, and Audience have given the greatest Encouragement to all these Misfortunes, and have done their utmost to shock the Authority of the Laws, which are made to restrain them, and render the Punishments inflicted in those Cases as most contemptible.

Since therefore these *profane and vain babblings* do (as the Text saith) *increase unto more ungodliness*; this should exhort all such, who pretend to a Sense of Religion, or Love to their own Souls, to avoid them. Such *evil communications* will corrupt good manners, and therefore *let us not be deceived*. You cannot after such a Warning pretend to Ignorance, and therefore the Crime must be wilful and inexcusable. It is universally reckoned a Scandal for any Clergyman to be seen in such Places; and therefore that, which is scandalous in one Order, must be disreputable in others. When (t) St.

(r) Page 70. l. 17, and p. 71. l. 7.

(s) Page 75, Scene the last. (t) Eusebii *Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. 3. cap. 28. alias 25.

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John the Apostle saw *Cerintbus* the Heretick in the same Bath with him, he immediately withdrew himself, and advised others so to do, lest the Judgments of GOD should overtake them for being in such Company ; and certainly we have as much Reason to take his Advice, in Relation to the *Play-House*. What *Tertullus* falsely said of (u) *St. Paul*, is too true of such Actors, *We have found such Men to be pestilent Fellows, λοιμὸν, a Plague*; and therefore we should do by them, as we do by others, who are afflicted with such a Distemper. Now if we are afraid of a Disease, which will only kill the Body ; how much more should we fear that Contagion, which, if not prevented, will *destroy both body and soul in hell*? Let us remember the Charge, which GOD gives us in the Text, and not only there, but also in other Places of Scripture. Thus it is *Eph. v. 11, 12. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them ; For it is a shame even to speak of those things, which are done of them in secret.* So *Prov. xiv. 14. &c. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away ; For they sleep not, except they have done mischief ; and their sleep is taken away, except they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of violence, and drink the wine of deceit.* And *Psal. i. 1, 2. Blessed is the man, that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sate in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in his law will he meditate both day and night.* If these Places were not frequented, they would fall of course ; and, when the Hope of their Gains was

(u) Acts xxiv. 5.

gone, they might betake themselves to some reputable Method for a Livelihood. However, if some Men should be so obstinate and refractory, as to take no wholesome Advice in this Case; yet, one would think, that such *Women*, who have any Regard to their Reputation, will shun those Places. One would think, that such filthy Discourse, would be very affronting in Conversation, and not to be endured by any young *Lady*, who values her Credit. And one would think it strange, that such Liberties, which they would justly resent in private Conversation, should entertain and please them on the publick Stage. In short, their Going thither seems to be no other than Spending their Money to hear themselves abused, and their Modesty affronted; and in such a Case it is much better to stay at Home. To suppose that such can like it, is a gross Reflection on their Virtue; and therefore it may rather be hoped, that they will take Care not to expose themselves. To sit contentedly and hear a Parcel of such lewd, wanton, and smutty Discourse, both in Prose and Verse: To see such Plots and Contrivances carried on both for Whoredom and Adultery without Detestation, makes the Rakes of the Town think, that these are as bad as themselves, and that it is not a Sense of the Sin, but rather of some temporal Inconveniences, or Want of Opportunity, which restrains them from Committing the like. This exposeth them to such Addressee, which they themselves abhor; and then, being afraid wherever they go, they wish too late, that they had never given the Occasion.

Lastly, Let us all be exhorted to put up our Prayers to GOD, *First*, For those who frequent such Places, that they may see their Error, repent of their Sin and Folly, and do so no more. If

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neither Sermons nor Advice can prevail; yet we know not but our Prayers may reach them, and GOD may have Mercy on them for our Sakes. *Secondly*, Let us pray to GOD for the whole Nation, that he would not lay these Sins to our Charge, but try and spare us a little longer. Never was there a greater Occasion for this than now. Do we think that there is a GOD? and that he is the Creator and Governor of the World and all that is therein? Can we (x) think that he will be always thus mocked, insulted, and provoked? that he will suffer his (y) glory to be given to another, and his Praise to the Devil, his greatest Enemy? and that he will not, at last, shew his Resentment and Indignation? The Prophet *Jeremiab* saith, (z) that when such wonderful and horrible things are committed in the land, and the people love to have it so, then GOD exert his Authority. *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the LORD? And shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* And St. Paul adds, (a) that when Men know the judgments of GOD, that they who commit such things, as Witchcraft and diabolical Representations, are worthy of death; they have pleasure in those that do them, they are most inexcusable. They despise the riches of the goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering of GOD, not knowing that his goodness should lead them to repentance. And after their hardness and impenitent heart, they treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgments of GOD, who will render to every man according to his deeds. These old Distempers are more difficultly

(x) Gal. vi. 7. (y) Isai. xlii. 8. (z) Jer. vi. 29, 30.
31. (a) Rom. i. 32, and ii. 1 to 12.

cured; and therefore we may dread, that (b) the Medicine of his Wrath will be more severe at last. Let us then pray to him, that if the crying Sins of this Nation are too great to be winked at, and his Patience is provoked to Fury, yet he would at least spare those who are innocent, and keep themselves pure from the Pollutions of the Age; that he would hide them, in particular, under the Hollow of his Hand, until his Indignation is overpast; that he would make a (c) Distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth him not; that he would (d) set a mark upon the foreheads of them that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations, which are done in the midst of the Land. That if he deals with us as with Sodom, for those Sins in which we imitate them; yet that every just Lot, who is grieved to hear of such Things, may be (e) preserved from the Flames. That if he should say, (f) *Sword, go through the land, to cut off from it man and beast, and make it desolate*; or if he should cause noisome Beasts to pass through it, or visit us according to his daily Threatenings with the Famine or the Pestilence; yet such Men as Noah, Daniel, and Job, who are found in it, may deliver their own souls by their righteousness. And that whenever he is pleased again to visit us in Mercy, to lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and give us peace; the Sense hereof may work such a Reformation in our Hearts, that we may no longer be guilty of such Provocations, but we may devote ourselves to his Service, like such as

(b) *Ad pœnam tardus Deus est, ad præmia velox;
Sed pensare solet vi graviore moras.*

(c) Mal. iii. 17, 18. (d) Ezek. ix. 4, 5, 6. (e) 2 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. (f) Ezek. xiv. 12 to 21.

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are preserved by him. To conclude, Let us all pray to GOD to give us his Grace, that we may *shun* these *profane and vain babblings*, since we find by daily and woful Experience, that *they do increase unto more and more ungodliness*. That we may delight ourselves in his Commandments, and say with holy David, (g) *I hate vain thoughts*, or them that imagine evil Things; *but thy law do I love*. That instead of these profane, wanton, and ungodly Songs and Ballads, which are daily coined in this Mint of Iniquity, and tend only to the Nourishing of Vice and Corrupting of Youth, we may refresh our Souls with such *Psalms*, divine *Hymns* and *Anthems*, and such heavenly *Hallelujahs*, which an Angel may sing, or a Martyr may hear; and which will be so far from Leaving a Sting of Conscience behind, that we may repeat them with Satisfaction on a Dying-Bed. Such *Musick* as this would revive our Souls in the greatest Affliction; and, whilst we taste of such Enjoyments in this World, they will be but as Earnests of far greater, which we shall enjoy in the World to come.

(g) Psal. cxix. 113.



APPENDIX.



Suppose that it will be urged, in Vindication of the Stage, that some of the Plays here mention'd are of an ancient Date, and are now out of Use.

To this it may be answered, that if this is true, yet it cannot be expected, that every Clergyman, who attacks the Profaneness and Lewdness of the *Play-House*, must have read the Stage quite through, or can be Judge, what are acted there, and what are not. The Reading of one or two, which are most frequented, will give a Man a Surfeit, who hath any Sense of *Religion*, and by these he may easily guess at the rest. However, this Objection is of no Force. *First*, Because they take the oldest Plays, which are fittest for their Purpose. Thus the Tragedy of *Mackbeth* continues in Esteem; and no visible Reason can be given for it, but because the Pleasures of Witchcraft are set forth to the greatest Advantage, and herein we have a full Account of the infallible Fore-knowledge of the Devil. *Secondly*, Those Plays, (*a*) which were justly exposed by *Collier*, at the first Attack upon the Stage, as most scandalous for Swearing,

(*a*) *Love for Love*, and *Tunbridge-Walks*, &c.

Curſing, Smut, Burleſquing the ſacred *Scriptures*, and all other Sorts of Profaneneſs, continue ſtill to be acted with the ſame Applauſe as formerly. To this may be added, that a Book was printed in the Year 1706, intituled, *The Evil and Danger of Stage-Plays, ſhewing their natural Tendency to deſtroy Religion, and introduce a general Corruption of Manners, in almoſt two thouſand Inſtances, taken from the Plays of the two former Years, againſt all the Methods lately uſed for their Reformation; and ſince this another was printed in the Year 1719, intituled, A Serious Remonſtrance in Behalf of the Chriſtian Religion, againſt the horrid Blaſphemies and Impieties, which are ſtill uſed in the Engliſh Play-Houſes, to the great Diſhonour of Almighty GOD, and in Contempt of the Statutes of this Realm, ſhewing their plain Tendency to overthrow all Piety, and advance the Intereſt and Honour of the Devil in the World; from almoſt ſeven thouſand Inſtances, taken out of the Plays of the preſent Century, and eſpecially of the five laſt Years, in Deſiſtance of all Methods hitherto uſed for their Reformation. Among others there are theſe Chapters, wherein the Contents are fully proved.*

CHAP. 2. *The Name of the Devil is frequently mentioned on the Stage, where Men are alſo turned into Devils, and crowned with Succeſs.*

CHAP. 3. *Witchcraft and Magick encouraged by the Stage.*

CHAP. 4. *The Devil honoured by the profane Swearing of the Stage.*

CHAP. 5. *The Devil honoured by the profane Curſing of the Stage.*

CHAP. 6. *Representations of divine Worſhip as paid to the Devil on the Stage.*

CHAP. 7. *The Divine Attributes, particularly his Eternity, Glory, Omnipreſence, Wiſdom, Knowledge,*

ledge, Power, Goodness, Truth and Vengeance, ascribed to the Devil on the Stage.

CHAP. 8. *The Scriptures perverted to the Honour of the Devil.*

CHAP. 9. *Religion, Virtue, and the Worship of GOD vilified on the Stage.*

CHAP. 10. *The Liturgy and the Articles of the Christian Faith burlesqued by the Stage.*

CHAP. 11. *Virtue exposed by the Stage.*

CHAP. 12. *Atheism and Profaneness promoted by the Stage.*

CHAP. 13. *Vice encouraged by the Stage.*

CHAP. 14. *The Stage a declared Enemy to all Reformation.*

CHAP. 15. *Heaven, the Abode of GOD, exposed on the Stage.*

CHAP. 16. *Hell, the Prison of the Devils, magnified on the Stage.*

CHAP. 17. *Other Ways, whereby the Devil is also honoured, and his Interest directly promoted by the Stage.*

CHAP. 18. *The Blessed GOD treated with Contempt upon the Stage.*

CHAP. 19. *The Works of Creation and Providence exposed upon the Stage.*

CHAP. 20. *The Holy Scriptures burlesqued by the Stage.*

Neither of these Books have yet been answered, neither hath there been any Method taken for their Reformation. They wholly act as their Interest guides them, without any Restraint; and we too plainly see, that their Interest guides them to pick out the worst Plays, which were ever acted in all Ages and Places. So that whatever hath been written upon this Subject, and any Quotation from any of their Plays, is of full Force at this

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Time, and may be alledged against their present Practice.

Secondly, It is urged in their Vindication, That they are obliged to make profane Persons speak and act according to their Character. To this it may be answered, That this Liberty may be allowed in every thing, which is not sinful in it-self, but no further. But this hath been formerly and effectually answered. *Collier* having exposed some Plays of *Congreve* for this Reason, he makes this Excuse in print, and urged it as far as it would go; to which *Collier* made a Reply, and shewed the Weakness and Insufficiency of this Pretence. So that they, who urge this Argument, ought first to answer that Book, or otherwise it stands as an Answer, to all that they still assert. But the still Insisting on this baffled Argument shews that such Men will never take an Answer, and with them there is no arguing. However; nothing of this can excuse the present Stage. All these horrid Blasphemies and the vilest Expressions are put into the Mouths of their principal Actors, whom they reward at last, and crown with Success. And this is the utmost, which can be done by them to promote it in the World.

In short, Profaneness, though never so well corrected, (b) is not to be endured. It ought to be banished without Proviso or Limitation. No Pretence of Character or Punishment can excuse it, or any Stage-Discipline make it tolerable. It is grating to *Christian* Ears, dishonourable to the Majesty of GOD, and dangerous in the Example. And it tends to no Point, unless it is to wear off the Horror of the Practice, to weaken the Force of Conscience, and to teach the Lan-

(b) *Collier's Short View of the Stage, Page 96.*

guage of the Damned. When such Actors are made to prosper according to their Wishes, it is much more scandalous and provoking, and there is hardly any thing, which can exceed it, except the Pleading for it.

Lastly, It may be urged in Vindication of the *Tragedy of Mackbeth*, that the Consulting with Witches is discouraged, because *Mackbeth* himself, the principal Person in the Play, came to an untimely End by Consulting with them.

But to this it may be answered, *First*, That granting this to be true, yet there is no Discouragement of *Witchcraft* or *Magick*. The *Witches* act their Parts (c) at several Times, and (d) make both their Entrance and their *Exit* by flying. They (e) sing, they (f) dance, they (g) commend their Way of Living, and seem to have nothing to disturb them, and their Character is (h) that *they have more in them than mortal Knowledge*.

But *Secondly*, It is not true, that Consulting with *Witches* is here discouraged: For *Mackbeth* is not the only Instance in this Case. *Banquo* had his Fortune told him, that he should be (i) *less than Mackbeth and greater*, and that he should be (k) *not so happy, yet much happier*. The first Part of these Prophecies was true in himself, and the other Part in his Posterity. He was also told, that (l) *he should get Kings, but he should never be one*. Accordingly he was (m) killed when his

(c) *Mackbeth*, Page 1. Line 1. p. 3. l. 22. p. 24. l. 32. p. 39. l. 19, and p. 41. l. 1. (d) Page 3. Line 22, and p. 1. l. 14. (e) Page 24. Line 32. p. 25. l. 18. p. 39. l. antepenult. p. 40. l. 1 and 23; and p. 42. l. 8. (f) Page 26. Line 5. (g) Page 40. Line 23. (h) Page 10. Line 27. (i) Page 5. Line 10. (k) Page 5. Line 11. (l) Page 5. Line 12. (m) Page 33. Line 35.

36 APPENDIX

Son *Flean* escaped, and (n) *eight Kings* are supposed to be of his Race.

Mackduff also consults the *Witches*, and had these Answers (o):

1. *Saving thy Blood will cause it to be shed.*
2. *He'll bleed by thee, by whom thou first hast bled.*
5. *Thy Wife shall shunning Dangers Dangers find,
And fatal be, to whom she most is kind.*

The first and third of these were fulfilled, because upon the Death of *Banquo* (p) *Mackduff* flees for *England*; his Lady, being afraid to travel, stays behind; keeps (q) herself and her Children in a strong Castle, where they were barbarously murdered by *Mackbeth's* Orders. The other (r) was fulfilled, when *Mackduff* killed *Mackbeth*, saying, *I have a Prophecy, which tells me, I shall have his Blood, who first shed mine.*

Neither doth the Story of *Mackbeth* any way discourage the Consulting with *Witches*. They tell him, that he was (s) *Thane* or Earl of *Glamis*. This (t) he knew. That he was (u) *Thane* of *Cawdor*. This (x) was true, but he did not then know it. And they tell him, (y) that he should be a King, which (z) happened accordingly. When they were willing to deceive him to his own Destruction, they tell him three Prophecies to make him bold.

(n) Page 43. Line 34. (o) Page 26. Line 11. (p) Page 37. Line 19. (q) Page 51. Line 20. (r) Page 59. Line 22. (s) Page 4. Line 34. (t) Page 5. Line 18. (u) Page 4. Line 35. (x) Page 6. Line 11. (y) Page 4. Line 36. (z) Page 23. Line 26, and p. 26. l. 28.

The first is (a)

*Beware Mackduff,
Avoiding him, Mackbeth is safe enough.*

This was true, for (b) *Mackduff* killed him.

The second is (c)

*Be bold and bloody, and Man's Hatred scorn;
Thou shalt be hurt by none of Woman born.*

To which *Mackduff* (d) answers, that he

Was from his Mother's Womb untimely ripe.

The last is (e)

*Mackbeth shall like a lucky Monarch reign,
'Till Birnam-Wood remove to Dunsinain.*

And accordingly (f) the Soldiers carried Boughs before them to conceal their Number.

And certainly, when the *Poets* make every Title thus fulfilled, they cannot do more to encourage those *diabolical Consultations*. But if *Mackbeth* was destroyed for Consulting *Witches*, it will also be remember'd, that he gained a Kingdom by the same Method, and this is a sufficient Encouragement. If the Apprehensions of temporal Death will not frighten Men from capital Crimes in other Cases, then certainly it will not in such Cases as these. Besides, Men are willing to ob-

(a) Page 43. Line 6. (b) Page 59. Line 25. (c) Page 43. Line 9. (d) Page 59. Line 25. (e) Page 43. Line 17. (f) Page 55. Line 34. p. 57. l. 16 and 28; and p. 59. l. 35. tain

tain their ambitious Ends, and either look not on such distant Consequences, or think to prevent them by being fore-warned. If *Mackbeth's* Example signifies any thing, the Moral is this. A Man may gain a Kingdom by Consulting with *Witches*; but he is in Danger afterward of Coming to an untimely End. But lest this should be a Discouragement, the *Poet* takes Care to revive the Spirits of those, who might be afraid, and boldly tells the Audience, (g) That

*Those who expect, and do not fear their Dooms,
May hear a Message, tho' from Hell it comes.*

The Prophet *Isaiab* tells us, that (h) his former Prophecies are come to pass; he also declares new Things, and tells us of them before they spring forth; and (i) he challengeth all the Heathen Idols to shew the things, that are to come hereafter, that we may know them to be gods. The Stage roundly answers to this Challenge, and ascribes it all to the (k) more than mortal or infallible Fore-knowledge of the Devil, and so make his Delusions, uttered by Witches, to vie with those sacred Oracles, formerly revealed to the Prophets.

I have dwelt the longer on this *Play*, as being one most frequently acted. There are a vast Number of others, which are more flagrant than this. However it is plain, that a single Sentence is often catch'd at, and turn'd to excuse the *Poet*, when the whole Plot and Contrivance lies the contrary Way. But, alas! the Antidote is too weak for the Poison, or rather in this Case is no

(g) Page 31. Line 34. (h) *Isaiab* xlii. 9; and xliv. 24 to the End. (i) *Isaiab* xli. 26; and xliii. 8, 9; and xlv. 7, and xlv. 20, 21. (k) *Mackbeth*, Page 10. Line 27.

Antidote at all. It serves only to lull the Conscience asleep, or gild the Pill, that the Poison may be swallowed without being suspected.

However, as from this Instance it is easy to guess at the rest; so this may lead us into the usual Methods of the *Stage-Poets*. They represent the worst Vices in the best Dress, and sometimes make a feint Representation to the contrary, as sufficient to atone for all their Enormities. With this they endeavour to amuse the World, that Men may not think them so bad, as they really are. Thus they usually answer the Objections, which are brought against them; and when they drown the World with an overflowing Sea of Profaneness, they would fain make us believe, that they are inoffensive.

An Advertisement in the *Gazette* of October 14, 1729.

Whitechappel Court-House, Oct. 7, 1729.

Tower-Division.

‘ **W** Hereas it was publish’d in the *Coffee-House*
 ‘ *Morning Post*, of the 24th of September
 ‘ last, that a Gentleman, well skilled in the
 ‘ Management of a Theater, is obtaining Letters
 ‘ Patents to erect one in *Ayliffe-Street* in *Goodmans-*
 ‘ *Fields*, by Way of Subscription, and that the
 ‘ Undertaking meets with a general Approbation.
 ‘ And also by an Advertisement published in the
 ‘ *Daily Post* of the 30th of the same Month, it
 ‘ appears that only seven or eight Persons have
 ‘ applied to the Justices against Erecting the said
 ‘ Theater, but that there has been no Meeting
 ‘ about it. These are therefore to certify, that
 the

the Erecting the said Theater is so far from
 meeting with a general Approbation, that great
 Numbers of Gentlemen and substantial Merchants
 and Tradesmen, residing in and near the
 said Street, have applied to His Majesty's Justices
 of the Peace, acting for the Division of the
 Tower, at several Meetings appointed for that
 Purpose, and set forth to them the evil Consequences
 that will necessarily attend the Carrying on
 such a Design. The Justices present at those
 Meetings were so thoroughly convinced, that the
 Erecting the said Theater so near several public
 Offices, and the Thames, where so much Business
 is negotiated, and carried on for the Support
 of Trade and Navigation, will draw away
 Tradesmens Servants and others from their law-
 ful Callings, and corrupt their Manners, and
 also occasion great Numbers of loose, idle, and
 disorderly Persons, as Street-Robbers, and com-
 mon Night-Walkers, so to infest the Streets, that
 it will be very dangerous for His Majesty's Sub-
 jects to pass the same, have already ordered Ca-
 veats to be enter'd in the proper Offices, to pre-
 vent the Gentlemen obtaining Letters Patents for
 Erecting the said Theater, and are resolved to the
 utmost of their Power, to shew their Disap-
 probation of the same, by doing every lawful
 Act they can, to prevent so great a Mischief.

Sign'd by Order,

Sam. Cowper, } Clerks to the Justices of the Peace
 and } at their Special and Petty Sessions
 Sam. Sadleir, } held for the said Division.



I S.